GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:415
ANSWERED ON:18.12.2002
VILLAGE PUBLIC TELEPHONES BY PRIVATE COMPANIES
RADHA MOHAN SINGH

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of guidelines, if any issued to private companies by the Government for providing basic telephone services in villages;

(b) whether these companies are not following the guidelines issued by his Ministry for providing village public telephones (VPTs) and are putting pressure to get the existing telephone policy changed for their benefit;

(c) if so, the number of VPTs installed by all the private companies providing basic telephone services till 31 October, 2002;

(d) the names of the companies which have not achieved their targets; and

(e) the action being taken to ensure that these companies fulfil their commitment?

Answer

THE MINISTER FOR PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND COMMUNICATIONS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PI MAHAJAN)

(a) to (e): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT TO BE LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE LOK SABHA IN RESPECT OF PARTS (a) TO (e) OF LOK SABHA STA QUESTION NO. 415 FOR 18TH DECEMBER, 2002 REGARDING VILLAGE PUBLIC TELEPHONES BY PRIVATE COMPANIES.

(a)
(i) For six licences issued in 1997-98 for Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Punjab service areas, a weightage of 15% was given to the number of VPTs voluntarily committed to be provided by the private companies during the first three years from effective date of the licence. In the event of villages still remaining uncovered on completion of the said three years period, the licence stipulated an obligation on the part of the Licensee to maintain or exceed its committed rate till all villages get covered with VPTs.

(ii) For licences issued in 2001, the conditions stipulate coverage of all categories Short Distance Charging Areas (SDCAs which are typically Tehsils) viz., urban, semi-urban and rural SDCAs in equal proportion during each phase of the roll out obligation at the end of 2, 3, 5 and 7 years from the effective date of the licence.

(b) No, Sir. However they have expressed difficulties in meeting the obligations.

(c) The private companies reported to have provided 4252 VPTs till 31 October, 2002.

(d) M/s Tata Teleservices (in Andhra Pradesh), M/s Hughes Tele.com (in Maharashtra), M/s Bharti Telenet Ltd. (in Madhya Pradesh), M/s Reliance Telecom (in Gujarat), M/s Shyam Telelink Ltd. (in Rajasthan) and M/s HFCL Infotel Ltd. (in Punjab) have not been able to fulfil their committed performance obligations.

(e) They have consistently been insisted upon by the Government to complete their unfulfilled performance obligations either by themselves or by working out arrangements to utilize the infrastructure of other service providers in their service area.